DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 359 RC 014 097

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TITLE Expanding the Small High School Curriculum Through Correspondence and Expanding Vocational Education Through Correspondence. A Combined Report on Dual Projects Begun June 1977 and Continuing to Date. Revised.
INSTITUTION Liberty School District, Spangle, Wash.
PUB DATE Mar 83
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; *Correspondence Study; Cost Effectiveness; Course Content; Course Evaluation; Educational Facilities; Federal Aid; *Individualized Instruction; Nontraditional Education; Program Descriptions; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Rural Education; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Curriculum; *Small Schools; Special Education; Student Attitudes; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS Washington (Spangle)

ABSTRACT

For the past 6 years Liberty High School (187 students, located in rural Washington state) has been expanding both its vocational and general education programs through correspondence study. Although federal grant monies allowed initiation of the program in 1977, the school district subsequently assumed financial responsibility. Student response showed a far greater diversity of interest than anything previously anticipated. Problems were encountered with the quality of the courses, the classroom setting in which the courses were to be studied, students' lack of interest in a course after a short time, and teacher assistance with correspondence course study. A special correspondence teacher/manager concept was inaugurated and found to be quite workable. A teacher/manager could handle some study hall students at the same time, but this did not work in reverse. Completion of the course on time has recently been made a condition for free courses (students are under contract to pay back the school district if they fail to finish on time). Because various classroom settings have not been satisfactory, a special correspondence/independent studies laboratory has been designed but has not yet been constructed. The latest experiment is with the work study program, whereby each student is given a job-related correspondence course. (BRR)

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EXPANDING THE SMALL HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE

[AND]

EXPANDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE

BY

GORDON WAGONER

A COMBINED REPORT ON DUAL
PROJECTS BEGUN JUNE 1977
AND CONTINUING TO DATE.

FIRST REPORTED	JANUARY	1979
REVISED	MAY	1979
REVISED	MARCH	1983

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL PROJECTS
AT SPANGLE, WASHINGTON 99031

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RC014097

EXPANDING THE SMALL HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE
REVISED MARCH 1983

In December of 1976 a Native American student attending Liberty High School at Spangle, in the State of Washington, approached his school counselor about the possibility of taking a course by correspondence for high school credit. This boy's experiences with the limitations of a small school curriculum (170 students grades 9 thru 12) had been less than fulfilling so he had begun searching for alternatives on his own.

In his senior year he sent for information from a magazine ad offering training for persons interested in the Fish and Game Management field and wanted to know if he could take the course as part of his high school program.

The counselor took the question to the school administration where it was favorably received. Tom Feldhausen, the high school principal, known for his educational leadership and innovations in the State of Washington gave the project his full support and served as spokesman and public relations man writing up and presenting slide programs on it in Washington and other states. *

The superintendent had tested similar commercial vocational correspondence courses as part of the educational system in the Idaho State Prison System in 1975. ** It had worked extremely well with prison inmates and he believed it could be adapted to expand the curriculum of small high schools as well, if a system of financing could be worked out for the test models.

Our Native American student was sure he could get financing for his course through his Indian Agency so he was encouraged to pursue the possibility.

Meantime the legality of the plan was checked through the legal office of the

* Tom Feldhausen may be contacted at Liberty High School, Spangle, Washington 99031, or phone (509) 245-3229.

** Dr. Stephenson Youngerman, who was superintendent of schools for the Liberty School District at the time this project was started and through its early years is now Superintendent of the Jerome School District #261 and can be contacted at the District office, Box 48, Jerome, Idaho 83338, or phone at (208) 324-2392.

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AND WAS FOUND TO BE WITHIN THE LAW.

AS POSSIBLE OBSTACLES WERE CLEARED OUR TEST MODELS BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE.

OUR STUDENT BEGAN WORKING WITH HIS TRIBAL AGENCY AND THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION STARTED LAYING PLANS TO TEST THE IDEA ON AN EXPANDED SCALE DURING THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE WAS FORMED OF COMMUNITY PEOPLE AND SCHOOL STAFF TO DISCUSS THE IDEA AND GIVE THEIR INPUT. AFTER STUDYING AND DISCUSSING THE CONCEPT, THE ADVISORY GROUP APPROVED A PLAN FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL MODEL PROVIDED GRANT MONIES COULD BE OBTAINED TO FINANCE IT.

TWO GRANT APPLICATIONS WERE MADE, AND BOTH WERE APPROVED, ONE FOR A VOCATIONAL GRANT, FINANCED BY A FEDERAL GRANT UNDER TITLE 1, PART C, SEC. 131 (B) OF PUBLIC LAW #90-576 THROUGH THE RESEARCH COORDINATING UNIT OF THE WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THE OTHER, A FEDERAL GRANT FOR GENERAL EDUCATION, THROUGH THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, WAS A PART ONE ESEA TITLE IV PART C GRANT. THIS GAVE THE PROJECT PLANNERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RUN TWO SEPARATE EXPERIMENTS WHICH WOULD COMPLIMENT EACH OTHER. ONE TO BE A TRIAL FOR VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED STUDENTS USING STRICKLY VOCATIONAL STUDENTS AND COURSES AND THE OTHER FOR ACADEMICALLY ORIENTED STUDENTS AND COURSES.

DURING THIS PERIOD THE ONE STUDENT PILOT MODEL WITH THE NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT BEGAN TO BOG DOWN IN RED TAPE AS HE WAS SHUTTLED ABOUT IN HIS PURSUIT OF FINANCING. THE SCHOOL YEAR WAS NEARING ITS END SO THIS PHASE WAS ABANDONED AS THE STUDENT WAS ABOUT TO GRADUATE.

MEANTINE, MOMENTUM OF PLANS FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR ACCELERATED. A SURVEY WAS TAKEN OF THE LIBERTY HIGH JUNIOR CLASS TO SEE HOW THEY WOULD REACT TO A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN COURSE OPTIONS, USING THE 270 COURSES LISTED IN THE BROCHURE OF THE NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL OF THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR CORRESPONDENCE

SCHOOLS. *

OF THE FORTY STUDENTS IN THE JUNIOR CLASS, EVERY STUDENT BUT ONE WANTED TO ELECT A COURSE NOT THEN OFFERED IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL. THIRTY SEVEN DIFFERENT SUBJECTS WERE CHOSEN SHOWING A DIVERSITY OF INTEREST MUCH GREATER THAN ANYTHING PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED.

FROM THIS EVENTUALLY EMERGED A MAJOR GOAL FOR THE PROJECT WHEREBY WE WOULD ATTEMPT FOR ONE SUBJECT AND PERIOD PER DAY TO MEET REAL INTERESTS AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ANY STUDENT WHO DESIRED TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOVE AND BEYOND THE REGULAR CURRICULUM.

THE NEXT STEP WAS TO COLLECT INFORMATION AND CATALOGS FROM EVERY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL THAT COULD BE FOUND AND AS THE CATALOGS, COURSE OUTLINES AND BROCHURES ARRIVED, STUDENTS BEGAN POURING OVER THE LISTINGS LOOKING FOR THIS NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN WHICH THEY WERE TO BE REALLY FREE TO CHOOSE WHAT THEY WISHED TO LEARN.

A FEW OF THE STUDENTS WHO WERE TOO ANXIOUS TO WAIT TILL FALL, HAD THEIR ORDERS READY AS SCHOOL CLOSED IN THE SPRING SO THEIR COURSES COULD BE ORDERED DURING THE SUMMER WHEN FUNDS WOULD BECOME AVAILABLE.

BY FALL OF 1977, THE COURSE LISTINGS HAD GROWN TO NEARLY ONE THOUSAND COURSES OF EVERY DESCRIPTION SO STUDENTS NOT ONLY COULD CHOOSE ALMOST ANY AREA OF STUDY BUT HAD THE OPTION TO CHOOSE FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF SCHOOLS AS WELL.

AT THIS STAGE PART OF THE PLAN HAD BEEN TO TRY TO ANTICIPATE STUDENT REACTIONS AND PERFORMANCE SO THE GRANT MONIES WOULD BE CAREFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY USED; THUS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DEEMED ELIGIBLE TO ORDER CORRESPONDENCE COURSES WERE LIMITED AT FIRST TO MATURE STUDENTS (JUNIORS AND SENIORS) AND TO THOSE CONSIDERED BY THEIR TEACHERS TO BE CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT STUDY. HOWEVER, A FEW SPECIAL NEEDS, HANDICAPPED AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS WERE ALLOWED TO TRY COURSES AS AN ADDITIONAL

* THIS BROCHURE AND COURSE LISTINGS CAN BE OBTAINED FREE FROM THE NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL, 1601 EIGHTEENTH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009.

EXPERIMENT.

By October 1978 a working Correspondence Center had been developed and staffed with a Secretary/Aide, Ms. Audrey McLain, to manage ordering, receiving and helping correspondence students. She soon became an expert in all phases of the operation as well as a support person for the correspondence students. *

As the dual projects progressed, many problems began to surface which had to be dealt with since many of our ideas began breaking down.

Following are some of the major misconceptions which required us to make some modifications and adjustments in our plans:

1. The high interest generated with free selection of courses would carry the students through the daily study grind.
2. The students would be able to study their correspondence lessons almost anywhere; the back of a classroom where other subjects were being taught, a study hall, a teacher's office or at home.
3. Vocational work with tools and projects would be feasible within the regular classroom or lab. areas.
4. A student assigned to the teacher in the area most closely related to the correspondence course would afford the student special help and encouragement.
5. Courses and services from the correspondence schools would be of high quality and educationally sound.

For many students the novelty of their new programs got them off to a good start but as time wore on they found they were being pretty much ignored by their assigned teachers who were working with their regular students on regular subjects and so the correspondence students found it easy to put off their correspondence work for other things.

Others who sometimes had to wait for several weeks for their courses to

* Ms. Audrey McLain now works as School Secretary for Liberty High School and can be contacted for details of operation at: Liberty High School, Spangle, Washington 99031, or phone (509) 245-3229.

ARRIVE DEVELOPED VERY BAD WORK HABITS WHEN THEY HAD NOTHING PRESSING TO DO. THESE ATTITUDES AND HABITS THEN OFTEN CARRIED THROUGH FOR THE WHOLE COURSE. THIS PROBLEM WAS REDUCED TO SOME EXTENT BY ORDERING AS MANY COURSES AS POSSIBLE IN THE SPRING FOR THE FOLLOWING FALL. GIVING EXPLORATORY SEGMENTS OF COURSES WHILE STUDENTS WAITED FOR THEIR COURSES TO ARRIVE AND HAVING STUDENTS START WITH LEFT OVER BOOKS AND MATERIALS FROM PREVIOUS COURSES OR DOING RESEARCH ON THEIR SUBJECTS. THE EXPLORATORY SEGMENTS AT FIRST WERE MADE UP FROM SAMPLE LESSONS, COURSE SUMMARIES, ETC. RECENTLY THEY ARE BEING DEVELOPED BY SOME CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS TO BE SENT OUT FOR TRIAL BEFORE A COMPLETE COURSE IS PURCHASED. BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY INDEPENDENT STUDIES DIVISION IS LEADING THE WAY IN THIS AREA.

THEY ARE WORKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPLORATORY COURSES TO GO ALONG WITH SOME OF THEIR FULL COURSES. *

BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT STUDENTS COULD AND WOULD STUDY THEIR CORRESPONDENCE LESSONS ALMOST ANYWHERE, STUDENTS WERE PLACED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL WITH TEACHERS WHO KNEW THE MOST ABOUT THE SUBJECT.

WHETHER THEY WERE IN THE BACK OF A CLASSROOM, A STUDY HALL, THE LIBRARY OR A TEACHER'S OFFICE, MANY OF THE STUDENTS WERE LEFT PRETTY MUCH ON THEIR OWN AND SO NEGLECTED THEIR WORK. SOME BECAME DISTRACTED BY OTHER THINGS GOING ON AROUND THEM WHILE OTHERS ALREADY HAD POOR STUDY HABITS WHICH FLOURISHED IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS.

TO HEAD OFF THESE PROBLEMS A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE TEACHER WAS ASSIGNED IN OUR SECOND YEAR OPERATION TO THE PROJECT. THIS TEACHER'S SOLE DUTY FOR ONE PERIOD PER DAY WAS TO WORK WITH AND MANAGE A GROUP OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS.

THE THIRD YEAR, TWO TEACHERS WERE GIVEN CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT FOR A PERIOD EACH DAY. THIS SYSTEM WAS A GREAT IMPROVEMENT AND WAS FURTHER EXPANDED EACH YEAR UNTIL IN OUR FIFTH YEAR WE HAD ONE TEACHER WITH THREE CORRESPONDENCE PERIODS. THIS

*FOR INFORMATION ON EXPLORATORY COURSES CONTACT BRUCE BARKER, INDEPENDENT STUDIES 206 HARMON CONTINUING EDUCATION BUILDING, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, PROVO, UTAH 84602.

NOT ONLY DRASTICALLY IMPROVED STUDENTS PERFORMANCE BUT ALSO ADDED A GREAT DEAL OF FLEXIBILITY TO SCHEDULING OF CLASSES FOR THE STUDENTS OF OUR SMALL HIGH SCHOOL.

THE ARRANGEMENT FOR VOCATIONAL HANDS-ON AND OTHER PROJECT WORK TO BE CARRIED ON INDEPENDENTLY WITHIN THE REGULAR CLASSROOMS OR LABS VERY QUICKLY PROVED TO BE UNWORKABLE. PROBLEMS INCLUDED DISTRACTIONS FOR THE REGULAR CLASS AND SOMETIMES THE TEACHER. OTHER STUDENTS ALSO TENDED TO MEDDLE WITH THE TOOLS, MATERIALS AND PROJECTS BELONGING TO THE CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS.

IT BECAME VERY CLEAR THAT THESE STUDENTS NEEDED AN ISOLATED AREA IN WHICH TO WORK AS WELL AS A PLACE TO LOCK UP THEIR MATERIALS.

THE ORIGINAL PLAN TO ASSIGN STUDENTS TO SUPERVISING TEACHERS WHO WERE IN AREAS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE STUDENTS COURSE SO THEY COULD GET SPECIAL HELP WAS LARGELY A FAILURE. IT SOON BECAME APPARENT THAT MOST TEACHERS TEACHING A CLASS OR SUPERVISING A STUDY HALL PAID LITTLE OR NO ATTENTION TO A STUDENT WORKING IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM OR IN AN OFFICE ON A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE.

A STUDENT WHO WOULD HAVE LIKED TO GET SOME HELP FROM A TEACHER IN A RELATED SUBJECT FOUND THAT THE TEACHER WAS SELDOM AVAILABLE. THESE STUDENTS WERE OFTEN SEEN AS EXTRA BURDENS OR THE TEACHER'S EXPERTISE WAS NOT CLOSELY ENOUGH RELATED TO WHAT THE STUDENT WAS LEARNING SO THEY COULD OFFER ANY REAL HELP. IN FACT THE STUDENTS OFTEN BECAME THE SCHOOL'S ONLY EXPERT IN THEIR FIELDS.

THUS THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE TEACHER/MANAGER CONCEPT WAS INAUGURATED.

THIS LEARNING MANAGER WAS ULTIMATELY GIVEN A CLASSROOM AND WAS ASSIGNED CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS FOR SEVERAL PERIODS PER DAY, WITH THESE PERIODS SPREAD ACROSS THE SCHOOL DAY.

LATER IT WAS FOUND THAT A TEACHER WHOSE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO BE A LEARNING MANAGER FOR CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS COULD ALSO MANAGE SOME STUDY HALL STUDENTS AT THE SAME TIME. THIS HOWEVER DID NOT WORK IN REVERSE, WHERE CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS WERE ADDED TO A STUDY HALL.

THE ASSUMPTION THAT ALL OR NEARLY ALL OF THE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AND SCHOOLS WOULD BE OF HIGH QUALITY WAS NOT BORN OUT AND THIS PROBLEM TURNED OUT TO BE THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH THE PROGRAM. THE PROPORTION OF GOOD COURSES AT A REASONABLE PRICE TO THOSE WHICH ARE NOT, IS EXTREMELY LOW AND NO WAY HAS BEEN FOUND TO DATE TO DISTINGUISH THE GOOD FROM THE BAD EXCEPT TO BUY THEM AND TRY THEM WHICH IS VERY EXPENSIVE IN BOTH TIME AND MONEY AND ALSO VERY COSTLY IN THE DAMAGE TO STUDENTS AND TO THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM.

SOME SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN WILLING TO SEND SAMPLE LESSONS, COURSE SYLLABI AND EVEN COMPLETE COURSES FOR INSPECTION BUT THEIR QUALITY IS NEVER REALLY KNOWN UNTIL SEVERAL STUDENTS HAVE TRIED THEM OVER TIME, THUS OUR ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM HAVE NOT BEEN VERY SATISFACTORY TO DATE. WE DID HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY UNDER OUR GRANTS TO TEST MANY COURSES REGARDLESS OF PRICE, WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOST HIGH SCHOOLS ON THEIR OWN LIMITED BUDGETS. IN THE PROCESS WE DID FIND MANY EXCELLENT COURSES BUT MOST OF THESE WERE BEYOND THE FINANCIAL REACH OF OUR REGULAR BUDGET. AS THE GRANTS EXPIRED WE WERE FORCED TO REDUCE THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS WITH WHICH WE COULD DO BUSINESS TO ONLY A FEW, MAINLY THOSE WHICH PRODUCE HIGH QUALITY COURSES AT AN ECONOMICAL PRICE.

WE CONTINUED TO PURCHASE A FEW NEW UNTRIED COURSES EACH YEAR WITH LOCAL FUNDS, NEARLY ALL OF WHICH WERE FROM COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS SINCE ALMOST ALL PRIVATE SCHOOL COURSES WERE FAR BEYOND OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

TO FURTHER COMPLICATE THE PROBLEM OF FINDING GOOD COURSES AND CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS WE FOUND THAT SOME SCHOOLS HAD AN OCCASIONAL GOOD COURSE WITH MANY VERY BAD ONES AND THAT AN OCCASIONAL ONE WOULD HAVE MOSTLY GOOD COURSES BUT SOME VERY POOR ONES, SO THE PROCESS OF FINDING THE GOOD COURSES IS A GAMBLE AND A RATHER LONG SHOT AT BEST.

OUR CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING IF A COURSE WAS GOOD OR BAD WAS QUITE SIMPLE. IF MOST STUDENTS LIKED THE COURSE, SUCCEEDED IN THE WORK AND COMPLETED THE COURSE IT WAS RATED GOOD. IF THE OPPOSITE WAS TRUE ON ALL COUNTS IT WAS RATED BAD AND A WASTE.

STUDENTS WERE VERY OUTSPOKEN ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THEIR COURSES AND THEY SOON DEVELOPED NEW AND LESS NAIVE VIEWS OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS AND COURSES. THE USUAL ATTITUDE OF THE CONSUMERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF THESE COURSES HAD BEEN THAT IF THE COURSE WAS NOT COMPLETED IT WAS DUE TO POOR WORK AND STUDY HABITS. WE WERE FORCED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS MORE OFTEN DUE TO POOR QUALITY OF THE COURSES.

THE VERY BEST COURSES WERE EXTREMELY POPULAR AND WERE CONSISTENTLY COMPLETED AND ON TIME OR AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND THIS BY ALL KINDS OF STUDENTS.

ONLY THROUGH THIS KIND OF TRIAL AND ERROR WAS IT POSSIBLE TO LEARN THAT THERE WERE SOME EXCELLENT SCHOOLS AND EXCELLENT COURSES AND ALSO MANY VARYING FROM POOR TO VERY BAD. OUR CONCLUSION ON THIS POINT IS THAT THERE ARE SOME VERY GOOD COURSES OUT THERE AMONG A PREPONDERANCE OF POOR ONES AND SOME WITHIN THE FINANCIAL REACH OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL BUDGETS. A BETTER SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED TO EFFECTIVELY SORT OUT THE GOOD SCHOOLS AND COURSES BEFORE A RECOMMENDED LIST CAN BE MADE TO SHARE WITH SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS WITH EXPERIENCE WITH CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IS NEEDED.

SHORTLY AFTER THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS GOT UNDER WAY IN 1977 IT BECAME CLEAR THAT STUDENTS WORKING ON PROJECTS WOULD HAVE TO HAVE A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORKING ENVIRONMENT FROM THOSE DOING ACADEMIC WORK.

SOUND PROOF ENCLOSED STUDY CARRELS WITH WINDOWS, STORAGE AND WORKBENCH SPACE WERE DESIGNED, BUILT AND PLACED IN THE BACK OF SOME CLASSROOMS. THIS WORKED VERY WELL FOR STUDENTS WORKING ON SMALL PROJECTS SUCH AS ELECTRICAL UNITS, SOLDERING, ELECTRONIC ISTRUMENTS, COMPUTERS, MINIATURE MACHINE WORK, ART, DRAFTING, ETC. THE WORK GOING ON IN THESE CARRELS HOWEVER DID AROUSE THE CURIOSITY OF OTHER STUDENTS AND OFTEN THE TEACHER AS WELL. FROM THESE EXPERIMENTS WE FINALLY ARRIVED AT THE CONCLUSION THAT A CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM WITH HANDS-ON ELEMENTS WOULD BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE IF CARRIED ON IN A LABORATORY SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR THE PROGRAM. IT SHOULD HAVE ALL THE ELEMENTS OF A GENERAL SHOP PLUS

SOUND PROOFED STUDY CARRELS FOR THEORY AND ACADEMIC WORK. WE HAVE SINCE DESIGNED A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE/INDEPENDENT STUDIES LABORATORY WHICH HAS YET TO BE CONSTRUCTED.

WITHOUT THIS LAB. THE NEXT BEST SYSTEM HAS BEEN THE SET UP IN A REGULAR CLASSROOM WITH THE LEARNING MANAGER. IT HAS BEEN A CONTINUING PROCESS OF IMPROVEMENTS AND REFINEMENTS OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS. WE FOUND THAT CLASS COMPETITION CAN BE REVIVED TO A DEGREE BY POSTING STUDENT PROGRESS CHARTS IN THE ROOM BUT MANY STUDENTS WORK BEST BY THEMSELVES IN THESE INDIVIDUALIZED STUDIES.

DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF OPERATION ALL COURSES WERE PAID FOR BY THE GRANTS AND AFTER THAT BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, A FINANCING SYSTEM THAT CONTINUES UP TO THE PRESENT TIME. OTHER SCHOOLS STARTING THE PROGRAM TRIED HAVING THEIR STUDENTS FINANCE THEIR OWN COURSES BUT FAILED FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION AS WELL AS TENDING TO LIMIT THE PROGRAM TO THE WEALTHIER STUDENTS.

RECENTLY WE MADE COMPLETION OF THE COURSE ON TIME A CONDITION FOR FREE COURSES. IF A STUDENT FAILED TO FINISH AND ON TIME (A ONE SEMESTER COURSE IN ONE SEMESTER) HE OR SHE UNDER CONTRACT HAD TO PAY BACK THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE ENTIRE COST OF THEIR COURSE. A STILL MORE RECENT REFINEMENT OF THIS POTENT MOTIVATOR HAS BEEN A NEW CONTRACT AGREEMENT WHERE THE STUDENT MUST PAY FOR EACH QUARTER OF THE COURSE NOT COMPLETED ON TIME. THIS HAS CAUSED THE STUDENTS TO WORK STEADILY RATHER THAN THE PAST TENDENCY TO PUT OFF THEIR WORK.

EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FAIRLY CONSTANT THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES TO EXPAND THE CURRICULUM, TO MAKE THE EDUCATION MORE COMPREHENSIVE, AND THUS FIT MORE OF THE STUDENT POPULATION. ALTHOUGH IT NEVER HAS BEEN FULLY SUCCESSFUL IT HAS PROGRESSED OVER THE YEARS SO THAT A HIGHER AND HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS COULD SUCCEED AND GAIN A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION MORE NEARLY FITTING THEIR ABILITIES, NEEDS AND INTERESTS.

HOWEVER, IN THE SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS THE DRIVE FOR COMPREHENSIVENESS WAS EXTREMELY LIMITED PUTTING THE STUDENTS IN THESE SMALL SCHOOLS AT A GREAT DISADVANTAGE, WHICH HAS NOT BEEN ALLEVIATED UP TO THE PRESENT TIME.

THE MAJOR GOAL OF THIS PROJECT WAS TO TRY TO MAKE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE STUDENTS IN THE SMALL SCHOOLS MORE NEARLY EQUAL TO THOSE IN LARGER SCHOOLS.

OTHER GOALS WERE TO INDIVIDUALIZE INSTRUCTION, OPEN UP OPTIONS TO THE STUDENTS SO THEY COULD EXERCISE SOME REAL FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND TO REVIVE THEIR NATURAL DESIRE TO LEARN.

WITH RECENT MOVEMENTS TO REVERT TO THE NARROW EDUCATION OF THE PAST UNDER SLOGANS OF BACK TO BASICS AND BACK TO IMPOSED AND INCREASED REQUIREMENTS, EFFORTS TO EXPAND CURRICULUMS AND ADD FREELY CHOSEN ELECTIVES ARE NOT NOW VERY POPULAR. THIS PROGRAM, THOUGH DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED, REPRESENTS ONLY A MINOR CHANGE IN THE WAY STUDENTS SPEND THEIR TIME IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOLS. THE PROGRAM AS IT NOW OPERATES AND HAS FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS INVOLVES ONLY ONE PERIOD PER DAY OUT OF SEVEN AND THIS OFTEN ONLY REPLACES THE OLD FASHIONED STUDY HALL, NOTORIOUS FOR TIME WASTING.

NEVERTHELESS THE LONG STANDING AND CLOSELY RELATED EFFORTS, TO INDIVIDULIZE INSTRUCTION AND TO EXPAND THE CURRICULUM HAVE CONTRIBUTED A GREAT DEAL TO MAKING A PLACE IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS FOR MANY STUDENTS WHO ONCE WOULD HAVE BEEN MISFITS AND DROPOUTS. MANY NOW STAY IN SCHOOL AND FIND A DEGREE OF SUCCESS IN SPITE OF LIMITATIONS OF CERTAIN ABILITIES, APTITUDES OR INTERESTS. THIS PROJECT WAS DESIGNED FOR THESE AND STUDENTS OF SMALLER SCHOOLS. A SYSTEM OF WIDE OPEN SUBJECT CHOICE CAN ENRICH THEIR LIVES, BROADEN THEIR HORIZONS AND OPEN ANY OF THOUSNADS OF DOORS NORMALLY CLOSED TO THEM. IT CAN PREPARE THEM BETTER TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES AND DECISIONS, AND HELP THEM TO BECOME BETTER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY WHERE FREE CHOICE WILL BE CENTRAL TO THEIR WAY OF LIFE.

A GREAT POTENTIAL REMAINS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AREA OF CORRESPONDENCE/INDEPENDENT STUDIES PROGRAMS.

SOME COMMUNITY COLLEGES HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF PRODUCING SOME EXCELLENT CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AS WE DISCOVERED WHEN WE FOUND ONE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE

STATE OF WASHINGTON WHICH OFFERS SUCH COURSES. * WE ANTICIPATED THAT THESE WOULD BE COURSES OF HIGH QUALITY AT REASONABLE COST AND WE FOUND THIS TO BE SO. ONE PROBLEM HOWEVER, WAS THE SCHEDULING OF COURSES. THEY WERE OFFERED BY THE QUARTER, PARALLELING THE COLLEGES REGULAR SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ON A RIGID TIME LINE. IF THEY MODIFY THEIR SCHEDULE TO OPERATE AS MOST OTHER CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS DO I.E., OPEN ENTRY OPEN EXIT WITH A YEAR TO COMPLETE, COMMUNITY COLLEGES COULD BECOME AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF HIGH QUALITY VOCATIONAL AS WELL AS ACADEMIC COURSES.

ANOTHER INSTITUTION WITH GREAT POTENTIAL IN WASHINGTON AND POSSIBLY OTHER STATES IS THE SKILLS CENTER. THESE ARE BEING DEVELOPED IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AT THE PRESENT TIME TO OFFER VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM SEVERAL DIFFERENT SCHOOLS.

INSTRUCTORS IN THESE CENTERS COULD ALSO DEVELOP CORRESPONDENCE COURSES FOR STUDENTS TOO FAR AWAY TO BE BUSSED. THE SPOKANE SKILLS CENTER HAS BEEN CONSIDERING THIS METHOD OF DELIVERING SERVICES TO STUDENTS IN REMOTE AREAS OF THE STATE AND THERE IS NO REASON WHY THEY COULD NOT CROSS STATE LINES. THE NEXT MOST LIKELY STEP IN IMPROVING CORRESPONDENCE AND INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAMS WOULD BE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS DEVELOPED IN A LARGE NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS. CO-OPS STATE WIDE OR NATIONWIDE COULD EASILY BE DEVELOPED WHERE THE HIGH SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE TEACHERS OR LEARNING MANAGERS EACH OFFER CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IN AREAS OF THEIR EXPERTISE TO OTHER SCHOOLS. AS HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS LEARN COMPUTER PROGRAMMING AN EXCHANGE OF EXCELLENT COMPUTERIZED COURSES IS SURE TO FOLLOW ALSO.

THE ABOVE SYSTEM COULD GROW OUT OF ONE WHICH OUR SCHOOL HAS USED AND OTHER SCHOOLS WOULD VERY LIKELY DEVELOP AS A PART OF THEIR PROGRAM; THIS IS, LOCAL IN-SCHOOL TYPE COURSES DEVELOPED BY THE LOCAL CORRESPONDENCE LEARNING MANAGER FOR THEIR OWN STUDENTS. THESE ARE, IN ONLY MINOR WAYS, DIFFERENT FROM COURSES WHICH ARE SENT THROUGH THE MAIL SERVICE EXCEPT THAT THEY ARE CORRECTED LOCALLY, HAVE

*FOR INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES WRITE OR PHONE OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION, EVERETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, 801 WETMORE AVE. EVERETT, WASHINGTON 98201 OR PHONE (206) 259-7151, EXT. 358/380.

ALMOST INSTANT TWO WAY FEEDBACK AND THE PROGRAM WRITER KNOWS THE STUDENTS AND CAN MODIFY LESSONS ACCORDINGLY.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY AND OTHER SCHOOLS ARE NOW PRODUCING SOME COMPUTERIZED COURSES AS THEY MOVE AHEAD IN THIS EXPANDING AREA.

THERE ARE NO DOUBT MANY OTHER DEVELOPMENTS WHICH COULD ENHANCE THIS KIND OF PROGRAM TO THE ADVANTAGE OF BOTH STUDENTS AND THE SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE NATION.

CORRESPONDENCE STUDY HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY EXPANDING THROUGHOUT THIS CENTURY. RECENTLY IT HAS BEEN GROWING AT AN ACCELERATED PACE AS NEW AND BETTER WAYS OF PRESENTING AND UTILIZING THIS LEARNING METHOD HAVE MATERIALIZED. THIS YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE PROGRAM STARTED AT LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL WE ARE HAVING OUR STUDENTS' APPLICATIONS FOR COURSES TURNED DOWN BY THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA BECAUSE THEY HAVE MORE CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS FOR SOME SUBJECTS THAN THEY CAN HANDLE.

OUR LATEST EXPERIMENT WITH CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IS IN CONNECTION WITH OUR WORKSTUDY PROGRAM. IN OUR STATE ANY STUDENT ON A WORKSTUDY PROGRAM MUST SPEND A CERTAIN NUMBER OF HOURS PER SEMESTER ON THE JOB AND AT LEAST ONE PERIOD PER DAY IN CLASS IN A RELATED STUDY. THE NORMAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE RELATED WORK FOR A DIVERSIFIED OCCUPATIONS (A SMALL SCHOOLS PROGRAM) IS TO TEACH GENERAL JOB RELATED INFORMATION IN CLASS. THIS INCLUDES SUCH THINGS AS INCOME TAXES, HOW TO APPLY FOR JOBS, HOW TO KEEP A JOB, ETC.

IDEALLY THE THEORY WOULD BE STUDIES DIRECTLY RELATED AND NEEDED ON THE JOB BUT NO ONE TEACHER OR LEARNING MANAGER CAN TEACH THE WIDE VARIETY OF SUBJECTS REPRESENTED BY THE MANY JOBS HELD BY DIVERSIFIED OCCUPATIONS STUDENTS.

OUR NEW ELEMENT TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM IS TO GIVE EACH STUDENT A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE DIRECTLY RELATED TO HIS OR HER JOB. IT APPEARS FROM OUR TESTS SO FAR TO BE A WINNER, THE STUDENTS STUDY WHAT THEY REALLY MUST KNOW FOR THE JOB AND THE TEACHER CAN DO A GOOD JOB WITH EACH STUDENT AND EACH SUBJECT. THIS AND THE MANY REQUESTS WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES FOR INFROMATION ON OUR UTILIZATION OF

OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSES ARE STRONG INDICATORS THAT THIS METHOD OF EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY IS HEALTHY, GROWING AND DESTINED TO BECOME AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM OF THE FUTURE.

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A PROJECT REPORT

EXPANDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE

JANUARY 30, 1979
REVISED: NOVEMBER 1979

EXEMPLARY PROJECT #77-AXC (162) N.C.

FINANCED BY A FEDERAL GRANT UNDER TITLE 1, PART C, SECTION 131 (B) OF PUBLIC LAW #90-576 THROUGH THE RESEARCH COORDINATING UNIT OF THE WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 1976-77 BEFORE THIS PROJECT WAS STARTED, LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL OFFERED 12 REGULAR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS IN ITS TWO PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO TRAIN STUDENTS FOR GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT, AGRICULTURE AND BUSINESS AND OFFICE. WHEN SCHOOL OPENED IN THE FALL OF 1977 OUR CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT HAD INCREASED THIS TO SEVERAL HUNDRED AND BY JANUARY 31, 1979 WE HAD LISTINGS OF MORE THAN 1800 VOCATIONAL COURSES FROM WHICH OUR STUDENTS COULD MAKE SELECTIONS. DURING THE NEXT THREE SEMESTERS UNDER THE PROJECT, SUBJECTS ACTUALLY CHOSEN BY STUDENTS FROM THESE OFFERINGS NUMBERED 37 INVOLVING 40 DIFFERENT STUDENTS. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS INVOLVED DOES NOT EQUAL THE NUMBER OF SUBJECTS BECAUSE OCCASIONALLY MORE THAN ONE STUDENT TOOK THE SAME COURSE AND A FEW STUDENTS FINISHED ONE COURSE THEN WENT ON TO TAKE A MORE ADVANCED COURSE. AS EXAMPLES ONE BOY TOOK A SMALL ENGINES COURSE THEN WENT ON TO TAKE A MOTORCYCLE REPAIR COURSE. ANOTHER, A FUTURE FARMER, COMPLETED A DIESEL MECHANICS COURSE, WENT ON TO TAKE A COURSE IN HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATION AND THEN TO TAKE ONE IN MACHINE LATHE OPERATION.

THIS WIDE DIVERSITY OF NEEDS AND INTERESTS FOUND OUTSIDE REGULAR PROGRAMS IN THE SMALL POPULATION OF 187 STUDENTS AT LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL, IS HIGHLY INDICATIVE THAT STUDENT INTERESTS IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS ARE NOT BEING MET AND PROBABLY CANNOT BE MET THROUGH TRADITIONAL VOCATIONAL OFFERINGS.

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL'S SMALL SCHOOL POPULATION MIGHT NOT BE TYPICAL. HOWEVER, THE HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST SHOWN BY OTHER SMALL SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN WHAT WE ARE DOING WITH CORRESPONDENCE TYPES OF COURSES POINTS TO CONSIDERABLE NEED FOR A REVAMPED AND GREATLY EXPANDED VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS.

MEASURED AGAINST ITS MAJOR OBJECTIVE: TO EXPAND THE "VOCATIONAL" OFFERINGS OF A SMALL HIGH SCHOOL, THE PROJECT CAN BE SEEN AS A DRAMATIC SUCCESS.

WITH THEIR VOCATIONAL CHOICES NO LONGER LIMITED TO WHAT A SEVERELY RESTRICTED CURRICULUM COULD OFFER, WE COULD NOW HELP THE STUDENT MATCH HIS OR HER REAL INTERESTS AND ABILITIES WITH AT LEAST ONE COURSE IN A FREELY ELECTED FIELD.

WHEN OUR FIRST 40 STUDENT SURVEY SAMPLE OF OUR TOTAL 1976-77 JUNIOR CLASS WERE FIRST EXPOSED TO THIS UNUSUAL EXPANSION OF VOCATIONAL OFFERINGS THEY REACTED WITH DISBELIEF. WHEN THEY FINALLY REALIZED THAT THEY REALLY DID HAVE THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE ANY COURSE THEY WISHED, THERE WAS A FLURRY OF EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION.

FOR THOSE WHO WERE UNCERTAIN OR HAD NO VOCATIONAL OR CAREER PLANS THE REACTION USUALLY WAS TO LAUNCH A SERIOUS CAREER SEARCH.

THE PROJECT WAS ALSO HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL OVERALL IN MEETING ITS MINOR OBJECTIVES.

FOR SUB-OBJECTIVE #1 WE HAD PLANNED TO EXPOSE, 37 SENIORS AND 47 JUNIORS IN 1977-78 TO MANY NEW JOB POSSIBILITIES VIA CORRESPONDENCE COURSES. THIS TOTAL OF 84 STUDENTS WAS GREATLY EXCEEDED BECAUSE OF AN EXTENSION OF THE PROJECT FOR AN EXTRA SEMESTER AND BECAUSE WE FOUND THAT IT COULD WORK FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS AS WELL AS OR BETTER THAN FOR THOSE ABOUT TO GRADUATE AND ESPECIALLY WELL FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS WHOSE RATE OF PROGRESS IS USUALLY IMPEDED. THUS ALL SENIORS IN THE CLASS OF 1977-78, 78-79 SENIORS, ALL 78-79 JUNIORS AND ALL 78-79 SOPHOMORES WERE GIVEN THE

OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT AT LEAST ONE VOCATIONAL COURSE FROM THESE HUNDREDS OF OFFERINGS DURING THE FUNDING PERIOD. ALL SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS ALSO WERE AFFORDED THIS OPPORTUNITY AND BEFORE THE PROJECTS END WE WERE ABLE TO OFFER ALL OUR 1978-79 FRESHMEN A CHANCE TO SELECT A COURSE.

THUS ALL THE STUDENTS WHO WERE ATTENDING LIBERTY HIGH IN 1977-78 AND ALL THE FRESHMEN WHO ARRIVED IN 1978-79 HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT AT LEAST ONE "VOCATIONAL COURSE" WHICH WOULD MATCH THEIR INTERESTS. WE THUS EXCEEDED THIS OBJECTIVE CONSIDERABLY, SUPPLYING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR 225 STUDENTS RATHER THAN THE PROJECTD 84.

FOR OUR SUB-OBJECTIVE #2 WE EXPECTED TO INCREASE OUR TOTAL VOCATIONAL SUBJECT OFFERINGS FROM 15 TO AT LEAST SEVERAL HUNDRED. THE TOTAL NOW IS APPROACHING 2000 COURSES WITH THE LIST CONSTANTLY GROWING.

SUB-OBJECTIVE #3 AIMED AT HAVING AT LEAST 20 STUDENTS ACTUALLY SELECT COURSES FROM THE TOTAL NEW LISTINGS BY THE END OF THE 1977-78 SCHOOL YEAR.

TWENTY STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED AND ALL BUT 1 OR 2 WERE WELL INTO THEIR COURSE BY JUNE 1978. IN ADDITION, BY APRIL 1978, 39 STUDENTS, INCLUDING RETURNING STUDENTS WHO HAD NOT FINISHED, PRE-REGISTERED FOR COURSES FOR THE FALL OF 1978-79, NUMERICALLY EXCEEDING THE ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE OF 20 STUDENTS BY 19.*

ONE OF OUR MOST INTERESTING AND PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS CAME OUT OF OUR FAILURE TO MEET ONE OF THE PARTS OF THIS SUB-OBJECTIVE.

WE HAD PROJECTED THAT THROUGH CAREFUL VOCATIONAL COUNSELING AND CAREFUL STUDY AND SELECTION OF THE VOCATIONAL FIELD AND THEIR "VOCATIONAL" CORRESPONDENCE COURSE, 100% OF THE STUDENTS SELECTING COURSES WOULD BE ABLE TO SELECT A COURSE WHICH MATCHED THEIR INTERESTS.

WE FOUND FROM EXPERIENCE THAT SOME STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF CAREFUL COUNSELING AND SELECTION METHODS, DID NOT LIKE THE COURSE THEY HAD CHOSEN AND OFTEN ENDED UP WITH A NEAR ZERO INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT UNDER STUDY AND OFTEN ASK TO CHANGE TO AN ENTIRELY NEW FIELD.

*SEE STATISTICAL SUPPORTING DATA IN THE OUTSIDE EVALUATION ADDENDED TO THIS REPORT.

THE REASONS GIVEN BY OUR STUDENTS FOR THIS PHENOMENON ARE TOO DIVERSE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS FROM BUT SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS DESERVE MENTIONING:

1. INTEREST, THROUGH A CRITICAL INGREDIENT TO SERIOUS PURSUIT OF A CAREER, SEEMS FRAGILE, WHIMSICAL AND EASILY MISPLACED AND NO AMOUNT OF ACADEMIC READING ABOUT, COUNSELING OR EXCITEMENT CAN ASSURE THAT THIS FACTOR WILL BE PINNED DOWN.

WE ARE CONVINCED THAT REALISTIC TRAINING OR COURSE WORK WHICH THE PROSPECTIVE WORKER MUST MASTER IN ORDER TO ENTER A JOB, IN MANY BUT NOT ALL CASES, CAN CRYSTALIZE THE STUDENT'S VOCATIONAL INTERESTS OR LACK OF REAL INTEREST.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF PEOPLE WHO TRAINED FOR ONE FIELD THEN FOUND WHEN THEY TESTED THEMSELVES ON THE JOB THAT THEY HAD INVESTED THEIR TIME AND MONEY IN THE WRONG FIELD, AND ONLY THEN SWITCHED THEIR VOCATION TO AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT AREA. THIS OCCURS TOO OFTEN WHETHER THEY RECEIVED THEIR TRAINING AT A UNIVERSITY, A COMMUNITY COLLEGE, A TRADE SCHOOL OR SOME OTHER KIND OF SCHOOL. USING THE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AS THE TESTING GROUND MAY NOT BE FOOL PROOF BUT IT CAN WORK QUITE WELL AND IS CERTAINLY LESS PAINFUL AND RELATIVELY LESS EXPENSIVE THAN EXPERIMENTING WITH JOBS, VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OR COLLEGE. IT WOULD BE FAR BETTER TO ALLOW STUDENTS THE CHANCE TO TRY OUT VOCATIONAL COURSES ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS AND WHEN AND IF, AFTER A GOOD TRY, THEY FIND THEIR INTEREST DISINTEGRATING, ALLOW OR EVEN ENCOURAGE THEM TO CHANGE TO ANOTHER COURSE OR AREA OF STUDY.

THIS CAN BE ARRANGED WITH CORRESPONDENCE COURSES EASILY, CHEAPLY AND WITHOUT DISRUPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL STURCTURE. OUR REGULAR COURSES CANNOT SINCE THEY OPERATE WITH SET OFFERINGS ON LOCKED SCHEDULES AND OVERWHELMINGLY UNDER GROUP INSTRUCTION.

A GREAT DEAL MORE RESEARCH WILL BE REQUIRED REGARDING THE VALUE OF "VOCATIONAL" CORRESPONDENCE COURSE EXPLORATION IN DETERMINING REAL VOCATIONAL INTERESTS BUT THE SPIN-OFF WE EXPERIENCE HERE LOOKS VERY PROMISING.

SURPRISINGLY WE WERE ABLE TO COME MUCH CLOSER TO OUR GOAL SO FAR AS STUDENTS

ABILITIES TO HANDLE THE COURSE WORK THAN IN MATCHING INTERESTS. OUR OBJECTIVE WAS TO MATCH 90% OF OUR STUDENTS WITH THEIR COURSES SO FAR AS ABILITY TO HANDLE THE WORK WAS CONCERNED. OF THE 43 VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS CHOSEN ONLY THREE STUDENTS DROPPED THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO DIFFICULT. OF THESE THREE, TWO HAD READING PROBLEMS. ONE OF THE TWO IS CLASSIFIED AS ACADEMICALLY HANDICAPPED AND IS TAKING SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES. THIS STUDENT TRIED AND DROPPED TWO COURSES TRYING TO FOLLOW HER MEASURED AND STATED INTERESTS BUT FOUND THEM TOO DIFFICULT. ON THE THIRD TRY SHE DID FIND A COURSE THAT WAS IN HER INTEREST AREAS AND MATCHED HER ABILITIES. AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING SHE WAS PROGRESSING VERY WELL, ENJOYING HER COURSE AND LEARNING THE FEELING OF SUCCESS. NO STUDENT DROPPED THEIR COURSE BECAUSE IT WAS TOO EASY. (SOME DID REPORT THEIR COURSES TOO EASY AFTER THEY WERE COMPLETED.)

FOR SUB-OBJECTIVE #4 THERE WAS TO HAVE BEEN NO INCREASE IN STAFF AND FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION THERE WAS NONE BUT WE DID HIRE A SECRETARY/AIDE WHO WAS INDISPENSIBLE IN ORDERING COURSES AND MATERIALS AND IN SETTING UP OUR FILES IN OUR CORRESPONDENCE CENTER. SHE PERFORMED ALL THE SECRETARIAL AND CLERICAL WORK CONNECTED WITH THE GRANT. IN ADDITION, SHE ALSO KEPT UP STUDENT RECORDS AND DID A GREAT DEAL IN THE WAY OF MOTIVATION AND MORAL SUPPORT. THE SECOND YEAR THE PROJECT RAN WITHOUT HIRING ANY EXTRA STAFF, HOWEVER WE DID SHIFT TWO TEACHERS FOR A CLASS PERIOD PER DAY FROM REGULAR CLASSES WHICH WERE TOO SMALL, TO MANAGE A CLASS OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS. ANY NEW PROGRAM NATURALLY DISPLACES STAFF AND A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL NEW PROGRAM WILL CAUSE SIGNIFICANT ENROLLMENT DROPS IN LESS POPULAR ELECTIVE PROGRAMS IN A SMALL SCHOOL. THIS WAS OUR EXPERIENCE AND IT CONVINCED US THAT THE BEST WAY TO MAKE THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM WORK IS TO GIVE IT THE SAME STATUS AS REGULAR PROGRAMS WITH ITS OWN TEACHER/MANAGER AND ITS OWN ROOM OR LEARNING LAB.

ONE OF OUR TEACHERS WAS A VOCATIONAL TEACHER, THE OTHER WAS NOT BUT BOTH BECAME QUITE EXPERT IN MANAGING A STUDENT CENTERED INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING SITUATION. ANY TEACHER ASSIGNED TO SUPERVISE A GROUP OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS IS CERTAIN TO LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY AND THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT. THIS WAS

A HOPED FOR RESULT WHICH DID DEVELOP FOR OUR TEACHERS WITH CORRESPONDENCE CLASSES. IT WAS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT EFFORTS TO GET TEACHERS TO INDIVIDUALIZE INSTRUCTION CAN BE SMOOTHLY AND EASILY INITIATED VIA CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT.

AS WITH OUR VOCATIONAL TEACHER, CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT WILL REQUIRE VERY LITTLE ADJUSTMENT FOR MOST VOCATIONAL TEACHERS SINCE THEY ARE ALREADY TRAINED TO HANDLE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION.

WE FOUND THAT ONE ORIGINAL THEORY, THAT STUDENTS COULD WORK ON THEIR CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IN THE BACK OF A REGULAR CLASS OR IN A REGULAR STUDY HALL DID NOT WORK VERY WELL FOR MOST STUDENTS.

HOWEVER, A LATER ARRANGEMENT WITH ISOLATED SOUND PROOFED STUDY CARRELS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECT WORK AND A TEACHER ASSIGNED TO WORK ONLY WITH CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS WORKS VERY WELL IF PROPERLY PLACED AND SUPERVISED.

IT WORKS SO WELL IN FACT THAT GIVEN HIGH QUALITY CORRESPONDENCE COURSES THE MAJOR BUGABOO OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDY, THE EXTREMELY HIGH DROPOUT RATE, CAN BE ALEVIATED. IN THE PROPERLY ARRANGED HIGH SCHOOL SETTING THIS DROPOUT RATE CAN BE CHANGED TO A HOLDING RATE AS HIGH OR HIGHER THAN REGULAR CLASSES. OF THOSE WHO DO DROP A CORRESPONDENCE CLASS NEARLY ALL STUDENTS CAN BE PICKED UP AGAIN UNDER OPEN ENTRANCE OPEN EXIT BY ALLOWING THEM TO SHIFT COURSES OR TO START A SERIES OF SAMPLING OR EXPLORATIONS OF INDEPENDENT STUDIES. OTHER PLUSES REGARDING DROPOUTS ARE THE POTENTIALS OF STUDENTS BEING PICKED UP AS THEY DROP OUT OF OTHER CLASSES AND THE HOLDING POWER OF A COURSE WHICH A POTENTIAL DROPOUT REALLY WANTS TO LEARN.

AFTER ONE AND ONE HALF YEARS OF THE PROJECT, NO STUDENT TAKING A VOCATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE COURSE HAD DROPPED OUT OF OUR SCHOOL BUT WE ARE SURE THAT SEVERAL POTENTIAL DROPOUTS REMAINED IN SCHOOL BECAUSE OF THEM.

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT ON CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT, "EXPANDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE" (OUTSIDE EVALUATION) FOLLOWS:

(19)

SUPPLEMENT

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL MAY 31, 1979

THIS REPORT WILL LOOK AT SOME COMPARISION FIGURES BETWEEN THE REGULAR VOCATIONAL PROGRAM COSTS AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM IN COSTS AND VALUE TO STUDENTS.

SETTING

LIBERTY DISTRICT IS SET IN RURAL FARM COUNTRY. IT DRAWS STUDENTS FROM SMALL COMMUNITIES IN THE AREA. THE AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME EXCEEDS $9,500 AND THE AVERAGE ADULT EDUCATION IS A LITTLE BEYOND 12 YEARS.

COST COMPARISION IN THE AREA OF VOCATIONAL F.T.E.'S SHOWS THIS DIFFERENCE:

STATE AVERAGE	$1,900.
CHENEY HIGH SCHOOL	2,045.
LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL	2,898.

CHENEY IS A SLIGHTLY LARGER DISTRICT NEARBY. THE EXPENSE AT LIBERTY AND SIZE LIMITED THE VOCATIONAL OFFERINGS UNTIL THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM. THERE ARE NO COMPARISON FIGURES IN THE AREA OF CORRESPONDENCE SINCE THIS IS A UNIQUE PROGRAM. JUST THE AVERAGE COST TO EDUCATE ONE STUDENT IS MUCH HIGHER AT LIBERTY: STATE AVERAGE IS $1,524 COMPARED TO $2,657. IT IS THE FEELING OF THIS EVALUATOR THAT EXPANDING THE COURSE OFFERINGS BY CORRESPONDENCE IS COST EFFECTIVE.

GENERAL STATISTICS

THE TOTAL GRANT FOR THE PROJECT WAS $16,000. THIS INCLUDED: $1500. FOR INITIAL "START-UP" COSTS TO BUILD STUDY CARRELS AND STORAGE FACILITIES. THE PERIOD OF THE GRANT COVERED FROM JUNE 1977 THROUGH JANUARY 1979. THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY LHS WITH THE HOPES OF CONTINUED FUNDING FOR-NEXT YEAR.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS TAKING COURSES WAS 55 FOR THE PERIOD OF THE GRANT[1]. THE COST PER STUDENT FOR THE PERIOD OF THE GRANT WAS $290. WHICH INCLUDES ALL THE START-UP COSTS. THIS IS COMPARED TO THE REGULAR VOCATIONAL COST PER STUDENT HOUR OF $483. THERE IS A MARGIN IN THE COST PER STUDENT WORK STATION. AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE THE COST FOR A SINGLE STUDENT WORK STATION IN A MACHINE SHOP WOULD COME TO ABOUT $5000 NEW. THE STUDY CARREL WORK STATION FOR THE CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS COST

1. THERE WERE ACTUALLY 42 STUDENTS OVER THE TWO YEARS BUT SOME TOOK TWO-YEAR COURSES. AND SOME MORE THAN ONE COURSE.

$1500 BUT THAT WAS ACTUALLY FOR TWO STUDENTS SO THE PER STUDENT COST WOULD BE $750. SOME OF THE STUDENTS RECEIVED SMALL ENGINES, TOOLS AND EVEN A LATHE FROM THEIR CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL, WHICH ALLOWED THEM SOME PRACTICAL TRAINING.

THE AVERAGE COURSE COST CAME TO $170. THAT INCLUDED THREE STUDENTS WHO HAD EXCEPTIONALLY EXPENSIVE COURSES. IF YOU REMOVE THOSE COSTS THEN THE AVERAGE COURSE COST ARRIVES AT $128.

THE TOTAL BUDGET FOR VOCATIONAL THIS YEAR COMES TO $120,000 AND THE TOTAL CORRESPONDENCE WAS $16,000.

SPECIAL STUDENTS

ONE OF THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT WAS THE OPPORTUNITIES IT GAVE TO SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS: THOSE HANDICAPPED, AND THOSE DISADVANTAGED.

SOME STATISTICS ON BOTH GROUPS SHOWS THIS RATIO:

A. DISADVANTAGED --15% OF THOSE IN CORRESPONDENCE WERE IN THIS GROUP
--THERE WERE NO DROPOUTS

B. HANDICAPPED --21% OF THOSE IN CORRESPONDENCE WERE HANDICAPPED
--8% OF REGULAR VOCATIONAL HOURS WERE HANDICAPPED
--60% OF THOSE HANDICAPPED WERE IN CORRESPONDENCE
--47% OF THOSE HANDICAPPED WERE IN VOCATIONAL (SOME WERE OVERLAPPING)
--THERE WERE NO DROPOUTS AMONG THIS GROUP

NORMALLY THESE STUDENTS WOULD BE CONSIDERED "HIGH RISK" BUT THEY SHOWED GREAT INTEREST AND ABILITY TO STICK TO THEIR COURSES. IT GAVE MANY OF THEM A CHANCE TO EXPLORE A VARIETY OF COURSES. SOME STUDENTS COMPLETED SEVERAL EXPLORATORY ONES. THIS MIGHT BE THE PLACE TO EMPHASIZE THE DEVELOPMENT WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE PROJECT. THE EXPLORATORY ASPECT HAS PROVEN TO BE A MAJOR PART OF THE CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT. IT HAS TURNED OUT THAT EVEN AFTER THE GRANT HAD RUN OUT, MANY STUDENTS WERE COMING IN TO CHECK OUT AREAS OF INTEREST. THEY MIGHT TRY MANY SUBJECTS JUST AS EXPLORERS. THIS LENDS FLEXIBILITY TO A SMALL SCHOOL. AS WAS STATED IN THE FINAL REPORT THERE IS NO WAY TO "COUNSEL" A STUDENT INTO THE PERFECT MATCHING COURSE OR VOCATION. THEY CHANGE EASILY AND THIS GIVES THEM AN AREA TO "TRY THEIR WINGS" WHERE THEY ARE FREE TO SEARCH ON THEIR OWN. SOME ARMED SERVICES COURSES COULD BE USED BY MANY STUDENTS. THIS SAVES MONEY IN THE LONG RUN.

DROPOUTS:

IT CAN BE SAID THAT THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM WITH THIS PROJECT. THE RATE IS USUALLY HIGH AMONG COLLEGE LEVEL CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS. ONE COLLEGE NEARBY DROPPED IT'S HIGH SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE A FEW YEARS AGO BECAUSE "IT WASN'T WORTH THE TROUBLE" ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE. THIS MUST HAVE INCLUDED DROPOUTS AND THOSE WHO DIDN'T FINISH. AN EXAMPLE AMONG THE COLLEGE LEVEL CORRESPONDENCE DROPOUT RATE SHOWS IT TO BE ABOUT 60%. THIS INCLUDES ABOUT 10% WHO SIMPLY QUIT DURING THE FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS AND GET THEIR MONEY REFUNDED AND ABOUT 50% WHO SIMPLY DO NOT FINISH FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. SOME OF THEM GIVEN WERE: LACK OF MOTIVATION, FALSE EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, OTHER PRIORITIES, ETC. AS SAID EARLIER, THERE WERE NO SCHOOL DROPOUTS DURING THE PROJECT AND ONLY 14% DIDN'T FINISH DUE TO DELAYS FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL; NOT BECAUSE OF LACK OF INTEREST OR ABILITY. SOME FINISHED ONE AND THEN STARTED ANOTHER BUT COULDN'T COMPLETE IT ON TIME. OVERALL THE COURSE DROPOUT RATE WAS NOT A SERIOUS FACTOR AT LIBERTY IN THIS PROGRAM.

INTEREST:

THE PERCENTAGE OF INVOLVEMENT FROM THE STUDENT BODY DOUBLED FROM THE FIRST YEAR TO THE SECOND. THE FIRST YEAR THERE WAS 11% OF THE STUDENT BODY ENROLLED IN CORRESPONDENCE. THE NEXT YEAR IT ROSE TO 24%. THERE IS STILL GROWING INTEREST AMONG STUDENTS. THE ACTUAL FIGURES ARE: 19 STUDENTS THE FIRST YEAR AND 42 THE SECOND YEAR.

MALE/FEMALE ROLES:

THE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES OFFER A CHANGE FROM THE TYPICAL VOCATIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN. SO FAR, THE FEMALES HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THAT PROSPECT BUT THE MEN HAVEN'T IN THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM:

--38% OF CORRESPONDENCE POPULATION WAS FEMALE
--25% OF THE FEMALES WERE IN NON-TRADITIONAL AREAS.

THE REGULAR VOCATIONAL PROGRAM AT LIBERTY DOES SHOW THAT:

--8% OF THE GIRLS ARE IN NON-TRADITIONAL CLASSES.

--15% OF THE BOYS ARE IN NON-TRADITIONAL CLASSES (I.E. SHORTHAND)

IT MUST BE SAID THAT THE STAFF AT LIBERTY ENCOURAGES THE BREAKING OF STEREOTYPES THROUGH COUNSELING AND JUST THE ATTITUDE OF THE FEMALE FACULTY MEMBERS WHO URGE GIRLS TO TRY ANY FIELD THEY WANT TO! THERE IS A CONSCIOUS EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE FACULTY TO HAVE BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS TRYING AREAS OF INTEREST RATHER THAN AREAS THAT PAST TRADITION DICTATES.

MOTIVATION:

ONE OF THE LONG STANDING GOALS OF OUR EDUCATION HAS BEEN TO INDIVIDUALIZE INSTRUCTION, THIS IS NOT AN EASY TASK, BUT THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM OFFERS A CHANCE AT MORE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION AND RAPPORT BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FACULTY. THERE WERE TWO TEACHERS WHO HAD CLASSES WITH JUST CORRESPONDENCE STUDENTS IN THEM. THEY WORKED WITH EACH STUDENT TO TRY TO MOTIVATE AND ENCOURAGE. IT HAS HELPED. MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THIS AREA, THE STUDENTS STILL ARE A BIT LOST WHEN THEY FIRST HAVE THIS FREEDOM OF WORKING AT THEIR OWN PACE. BUT THERE WERE OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED TO SUPPORT THOSE TEACHERS. FIRST OF ALL THERE WAS A PART-TIME SECRETARY/AIDE (PAID $1,000. OUT OF THE GRANT). HER JOB WAS TO OVERSEE THE STUDENTS AND HELP THEM WITH ANY QUESTIONS THEY HAD ABOUT MATERIALS OR THEIR ASSIGNMENTS. HER HELP TURNED OUT TO BE INVALUABLE TO THE STUDENTS AS THEY WOULD COME WITH THEIR COMPLAINTS AND THEIR SUCCESSES AND ALWAYS RECEIVE A "PAT ON THE BACK". THIS MEANT MUCH TO THEM. THE FACULTY WAS AVAILABLE FOR EXPERTISE WHEN THEY COULD PROVIDE IT. OF COURSE THEY WEREN'T ALWAYS ABLE TO ANSWER A QUESTION BUT THEY DID MANY TIMES DURING THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT.

THERE WAS ALSO A VOLUNTEER AIDE WHO FLOATED FROM STUDENT TO STUDENT AND DEALT WITH QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS AND SIMPLY PLUGGED IN THE SPOTS WHERE HE WAS NEEDED. THE AIDE WAS ALSO FREE TO TAKE THE STUDENTS ON FIELD EXPERIENCES RELATED TO THEIR COURSES. THIS PROVED TO BE VERY REWARDING. ONE GIRL WAS TAKEN ON A FIELD TRIP TO A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY TO GET FIRST HAND INFORMATION ON HER AREA OF INTEREST. TWO GIRLS WERE TAKEN TO A LOCAL BUSINESS COLLEGE AND ONE IS NOW ENROLLED FOR NEXT FALL. SHE EVEN RECEIVED A SCHOLARSHIP FROM THAT COLLEGE. THIS IS ONE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WHICH CAN BE EXPANDED UPON. THE IDEA WAS TO GIVE THE STUDENTS SOME CONTACT

WITH THE WORKING WORLD AND EXPOSE THEM TO OPPORTUNITIES THEY WOULD NORMALLY MISS.

ANTOHER ASPECT OF MOTIVATION WAS THE DAILY LOG KEPT FOR A SHORT TIME BY THE STUDENTS. THEY HAD TO FILL OUT A DAILY TIME LOG WHICH TOLD HOW MUCH TIME THEY SPENT ON THEIR CORRESPONDENCE THAT DAY AND HOW THEY WERE PROGRESSING. THE STUDENTS HAD TO BE REMINDED TO FILL IT OUT, BUT FOR THE MOST PART THEY COOPERATED AND IT WAS FOUND THAT MANY DID THEIR CORRESPONDENCE ON THE WEEKEND OR AFTER SCHOOL, WHICH THEY WERE FREE TO DO. THIS GAVE THEM FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. AS WITH ALL GROUPS OR STUDENTS SOME DID BETTER THAN OTHERS. AS TIME GOES ON THERE CAN BE WAYS WORKED OUT TO BETTER MOTIVATE AND GUIDE THE STUDENTS. MORE VOLUNTEER AIDES WOULD BENEFIT THE PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIALIZED AREAS WOULD PROVIDE EXPERTISE.

THERE WAS ANOTHER BONUS WHICH BECAME APPARENT AT GRADUATION. SEVERAL STUDENTS RECEIVED DIPLOMAS FROM THEIR CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS. THIS WAS IMPRESSIVE AND SHOWED THE KIND OF SERIOUSNESS THE STUDENTS HAD ABOUT THEIR COURSES. SOME RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS TO COLLEGES THEY WERE GOING TO AS A RESULT OF THEIR CORRESPONDENCE INTEREST. ONE OF THE KEY BENEFITS OF THIS KIND OF PROGRAM IS THAT HANDICAPPED STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO RECEIVE RECOGNITION FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN CORRESPONDENCE WHICH THEY WOULD NOT OTHERWISE RECEIVE IN ACADEMIC OR ATHLETIC CAPACITIES.

WITH THE CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM THERE ARE STUDENTS WHO CAN INCREASE THEIR SELF IMAGE AND HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLORE AND SEARCH FOR AREAS OF INTEREST AND TALENT THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO DO IN A LIMITED VOCATIONAL PROGRAM. THE LESSON OF SELF ESTEEM MAY BE AN OVERLOOKED BONUS TO THIS IDEA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. TO CONTINUE FUNDING THE CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT AT LIBERTY. THIS IS PROVING TO BE COST EFFECTIVE IN RELATION TO REGULAR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND VALUABLE TO THE ENTIRE STUDENT BODY AS IT OPENS DOORS TO LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF OPPORTUNITIES.
2. ATTEMPT TO MONITOR STUDENTS WITH THE HELP OF VOLUNTEER AIDES AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FIELD EXPERIENCES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT.
3. SPEED UP THE FEEDBACK TIME FROM CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS SO DELAYS WON'T HURT STUDENTS.

4. KEEP ENCOURAGING MALE AND FEMALE INTEREST IN NON-TRADITIONAL ROLES.

5. OTHER SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS START THE SAME TYPE OF PROJECT.